

Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern University School of Nursing Awarded Nearly \$1 Million by National Institutes of Health for Research Abroad Program

FEBRUARY 23, 2011

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Georgia Southern University has been awarded a three-year, nearly \$1 million grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) to fund the Minority Health International Research Training (MHIRT) program within the College of Health and Human Sciences School of Nursing. The program is the only one of its kind in Georgia and one of only a select number offered by universities in the country. Georgia Southern was awarded a grant in the amount of \$713,879.58 by the NCMHD and an additional \$230,295.69 carryover amount.

The new program is designed to provide the University's nursing students with the opportunity to experience the research of various minority health care issues in the U.S. and abroad, while also increasing minority representation in the health research profession. The program, the first-of-its-kind at Georgia Southern, is part of the center's long-term strategy to help reduce the health burdens among underserved populations.

During the all-expenses paid study abroad program, students will be paired with research/faculty mentors and preceptors at the Private University of Witten/Herdecke (Germany) with sites at Witten, Freiburg and Rheine, Germany; the University of Vienna in Vienna, Austria; University Sapienza of Rome, Rome, Italy; Khon Kaen University of Khon Kaen, Thailand; and different sites in Latin America through the Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Bogota).

Selected areas of research during the MHIRT project include:

Examining the impact of breast cancer on couple interaction in couples of diverse ethnicity; Roles of a caregiver in resolving grief issues for families coping with Alzheimer's disease and losses from chronic illness conditions; Exploration of how older persons with diabetes respond to diabetic education designed to improve health outcomes; The impact of government policies on the experience of family care giving for a chronically ill family member and what quality health indicators are needed for evidence of change.

Kathryn Anderson, Ph.D., professor of nursing at Georgia Southern University, is the principal investigator of the federal grant that is in its seventh year of a nine-year award grant cycle. Anderson joined the University last fall after serving as associate professor of nursing at Florida International University.

"The MHIRT program will not only provide a very memorable experience for Georgia Southern's nursing students, but it will give them a greater understanding of the benefits and importance of health care research in evidence-based standards of care," said Anderson. She also noted that the

program will help students compare how different healthcare systems around the world are responding to differing health issues, particularly focusing on chronic illness, cultural approaches, and the family response.

"This new program is the only one of its kind in Georgia and will be a unique and major attraction for prospective students considering the nursing profession," said Donna Hodnicki, Ph.D., FNP-BC, FAAN, LNC, interim School of Nursing chair and professor at Georgia Southern University. "Not only will it provide students with an incredible academic and study abroad opportunity, but we are confident that it will encourage them to explore careers in health care research that will ultimately benefit minority and underserved populations."

MHIRT awards are designed to help U.S. universities provide short-term international training opportunities in health disparities research. These opportunities are for undergraduate and graduate students in the health professions who are from minority populations, which are usually underrepresented in basic science, nursing, biomedical, clinical, or behavioral health research career fields.

Fourteen students from Georgia, South Carolina, Florida and Kentucky have been selected to participate in the summer 2011 program, which include 10 undergraduate students and four graduate students from nursing and public health disciplines. Students selected for the program attained an overall "B" average, demonstrated an interest in working with vulnerable populations to address health disparities, and received recommendations from their professors as excellent candidates.

In preparation for their study abroad semester, MHIRT students will complete two online courses that focus on global health, vulnerable populations, the research process, and cultural immersion to their host country. Additionally, they will work with faculty from the School of Nursing and the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH).

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"O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree..." 🎄🎵#TBT to circa 1964, when a tree in front of the Williams Center was decorated for the holidays.



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